



# Department of Homeland Security Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 30 October 2003

Current Nationwide  
Threat Level is



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[www.whitehouse.gov/homeland](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland)

## Daily Overview

- ZDNet reports a criminal element from Russia may be responsible for the recent spate of spoof e-mails that have attempted to con online-banking customers into revealing their account details. (See item [8](#))
- NBC10 News reports that box cutters were found Tuesday on US Airways planes in Boston and Philadelphia, and federal officials said they were investigating how the tools made it on board. (See item [10](#))
- The Associated Press reports government researchers state that traces of prescription drugs, household cleaners, and chemicals from MRIs are showing up in the U.S. water supply. (See item [16](#))
- The Associated Press reports the most powerful geomagnetic storm possible hit Earth early Wednesday, October 29, threatening power outages, disrupting airlines communications and damaging some satellites. (See item [25](#))

### DHS/IAIP Update *Fast Jump*

**Production Industries:** [Energy](#); [Chemical](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

**Service Industries:** [Banking and Finance](#); [Transportation](#); [Postal and Shipping](#)

**Sustenance and Health:** [Agriculture](#); [Food](#); [Water](#); [Public Health](#)

**Federal and State:** [Government](#); [Emergency Services](#)

**IT and Cyber:** [Information and Telecommunications](#); [Internet Alert Dashboard](#)

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## Energy Sector

**Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels:** **Physical:** Elevated, **Cyber:** Elevated

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://esisac.com>]

*October 29, Associated Press* — **Small fire shuts down Cooper nuclear plant.** A small fire on a wooden power pole cross arm led to a shutdown of the Nebraska Public Power District's (NPPD) Cooper Nuclear Station in Brownville, NE, on Tuesday, October 28. The utility said the small fire on the power pole carrying a 345-kilovolt power line was discovered by plant security at 1:30 a.m. Operations personnel shut down the plant and de-energized the power lines on the pole. The fire was extinguished about 6:50 a.m. **The cause of the fire was not yet known and damage to the structure is being assessed.** NPPD said the plant will remain shut down until the investigation is completed, the situation corrected and the plant is ready to resume power generation.

Source: <http://www.theomahachannel.com/news/2591581/detail.html>

2. *October 29, Associated Press* — **Nuclear waste repository opening may be delayed.** A federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, October 28, sent a case involving the legal firm hired to help with the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository back to U.S. District Court to determine if the Energy Department had ruled out any conflict of interest before hiring its legal counsel. The firm, which spent two years preparing the department's application for a Nuclear Regulatory Commission permit, withdrew as counsel in November 2001 after the allegations were raised. The firm had lobbied for a pro-nuclear group and had previously done work for a Yucca Mountain contractor. **If a judge finds the Energy Department didn't consider the potential conflict before hiring the firm, the contract could be given to another law firm.** That could mean a delay in the project because all of the previous firm's work could be reviewed. The Energy Department, which has been without a legal counsel since the law firm left, plans to submit its application by the end of 2004, and hopes to open Yucca Mountain by 2010.

Source: [http://abcnews.go.com/wire/US/ap20031029\\_940.html](http://abcnews.go.com/wire/US/ap20031029_940.html)

3. *October 29, Reuters* — **Some Bangladesh power returns after outage. Only a few power plants were operating in Bangladesh on Wednesday, October 29, hours after a major breakdown paralyzed industrial activity and disrupted communications.** Most industries ground to a halt after technical problems with the national power grid halted the country's 18 power plants at 9:40 a.m., and silenced many mobile telephone networks. Most parts of Dhaka — including the diplomatic zones and major business centers — were without power and small generators were being used to run machinery. But officials said nearly half of total supply was restored by 4:30 p.m. **"The national grid failed at 9:40 a.m.," a senior Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) engineer said. After the national grid "tripped," all the power plants stopped,** officials said. "We are now giving power only to important government installations," a BPDB official said, adding it might take time to restore total power.

Source: [http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma\\_newsarticle1\\_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters\\_pma\\_2003\\_10\\_29\\_eng-reuters\\_pma\\_SOME-BANGLADESH-POWER-RETURNS-AFTER-OUTAGE&SMContentSet=0](http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma_newsarticle1_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters_pma_2003_10_29_eng-reuters_pma_SOME-BANGLADESH-POWER-RETURNS-AFTER-OUTAGE&SMContentSet=0)

4. *October 29, Reuters* — **U.S. generators trim power to absorb solar flare.** North American power generators said they throttled back the amount of energy flowing onto the transmission grid on Wednesday, October 29, to shield it from the impact of a solar flare that earlier hit Earth. **The transmission grid, a vast system of electrically charged lines suspended on towers above the Earth's surface, is especially vulnerable to solar flares, acting like a net fully exposed to the sun's burst of magnetic energy.** "There have been some minor

**impacts. We've had several nuclear power plants reduce power and a small hydroelectric facility went out of service, but it's been well within companies' ability to handle,"** said Ellen Vancko, a spokesperson at the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC). Power companies, always on alert for so-called geomagnetic disturbances, have reduced generation at facilities to give the high-voltage power grid more flexibility to absorb any sudden electrical surges triggered by the solar flare. **In New England, the region's electric grid operator warned on its Website that power imports from Quebec and exports to New York could be reduced because of the solar magnetic disturbance.**

Source: [http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma\\_newsarticle1\\_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters\\_pma\\_2003\\_10\\_29\\_eng-reuters\\_pma\\_U-S-GE\\_NERATORS-TRIM-POWER-TO-ABSORB-SOLAR-FLARE&SMContentSet=0](http://hsweb01.screamingmedia.com/PMA/pma_newsarticle1_reuters.htm?SMDOCID=reuters_pma_2003_10_29_eng-reuters_pma_U-S-GE_NERATORS-TRIM-POWER-TO-ABSORB-SOLAR-FLARE&SMContentSet=0)

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## **Chemical Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Defense Industrial Base Sector**

5. *October 29, Aerospace Daily* — **NIMA to develop 'cadre' of analysts. Coming off its experience deploying imagery analysts to Iraq, the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) now plans to develop a regular "cadre" of personnel that would stand ready to go into theater with U.S. military forces.** The deployment of approximately 90 NIMA employees to Iraq at the height of the war was an "unprecedented" move for the agency, but one that proved very rewarding to the troops and the employees themselves, according to NIMA Director Lt. General James Clapper. **The planned cadre would have to be trained in weapons, chem/bio threats and the rules of engagement, Clapper said. Although it may not be a "fixed number," the cadre probably would consist of 200–300 people to support the rotation of deployed personnel** on a standard schedule of 120 days to six months, Clapper said. When NIMA personnel return from theater, "they really understand, up front and personal, what the combat user needs. They bring that insight back to the rest of the workforce," Clapper said.

Source: [http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel\\_aerospacedaily\\_story.jsp?id=news/dev10293.xml](http://www.aviationnow.com/avnow/news/channel_aerospacedaily_story.jsp?id=news/dev10293.xml)

6. *October 29, The Daily Press (VA)* — **Navy may deploy groups for shorter spans.** The Navy is considering deploying aircraft carrier groups more often for shorter periods of time. **Admiral Vern Clark, the chief of naval operations, recently said he saw no special need for the conventional six-month carrier group deployment. The change is part of the Navy's Flexible Deployment Concept,** which is undergoing a Pentagon review and is expected to start in December. What Clark wants is to be able to send six carrier groups — plus two more if needed — to U.S. military hot spots like Iraq and Afghanistan. Before those conflicts, the Navy's traditional approach to carrier maintenance and the follow-up period of refitting the ship and retraining the crew would have made it nearly impossible, time-wise, to deploy that

many ships so quickly. **The idea behind the Flexible Deployment Concept is to end the severe pendulum shifts between battle readiness and the downtime for repairs after a deployment, especially with the long, gradual training period to get both sailors and ships ready to deploy again. Navy officials want to keep the ships out of shipyards as much as possible and ready to battle again as soon as possible.**

Source: <http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-01340sy0oct29.0.5087185.story?coll=dp-headlines-topnews>

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## **Banking and Finance Sector**

7. *October 29, Associated Press* — **New \$20 bill causes problems in machines. As colorful new \$20 bills circulate around the nation, more consumers are finding out that the notes do not work on automated payment machines like those found in self-service checkout counters at grocery stores.** The first calls started coming into the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing Monday, October 27. **The problem seems to plague mostly automated payment machines – a relatively recent arrival in the industry, the bureau said.** After the problems following the 1998 redesign, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing wanted to make sure its latest version was technology friendly. So more than a year before the new bills were put into circulation, the bureau reached out to the vending machine industry, transit authorities and the gambling industry to help them get ready for the new bills, said Dawn Haley, spokesperson for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. **However, nobody thought about the automated payment machines until the first calls started coming in to the bureau after the new currency was put into circulation.** Manufacturers of various vending and money changing machines are advertising software and hardware upgrades on the Internet that range in cost from free to \$40 per machine.

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0.2933.101545.00.html>

8. *October 28, ZDNet UK* — **Bank scam may originate from Russia.** A criminal element from Russia may be responsible for the recent spate of spoof e-mails that have attempted to con online-banking customers into revealing their account details. Over the past month, Internet banking customers of Barclays, Lloyds TSB, Halifax and NatWest, have received e-mails that appear to be from their bank, asking them to confirm their personal details. **The scam is reminiscent of the infamous "419" scam e-mails, where the scammer offers large sums of money in exchange for assistance with transferring funds out of Nigeria or other countries, but experts believe that the new frauds originate from Russia.** Pete Simpson, manager at a software security company, said that although there is still no solid evidence that the Russians are behind the e-mails, **a significant number of the scams have been originating from the same source.** "They appear to be coming out of Russia via an ISP in New Zealand at the minute, but that can switch any time," said Simpson. He said that the new scams are more organized than the 419 scams, representing "a concerted project as opposed to the odd fishing expedition."

Source: <http://www.zdnet.com.au/newstech/security/story/0.2000048600.20280199.00.htm>

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## Transportation Sector

9. *October 29, Federal Computer Week* — **Shippers must follow rules.** Since it is nearly impossible to police goods made in foreign countries before they arrive at ports to be shipped to the United States, **it is critically important to make sure shippers comply with security rules before reaching a U.S. port.** Asa Hutchinson, DHS' undersecretary for Border and Transportation Security, told a gathering of maritime officials in New York City. **"Maritime operations provide the means of opportunity for terrorists," he said today at the U.S. Maritime Security Expo, "and disruption of the supply chain would be devastating."** With 361 ports in the United States and 7,500 foreign flagged vessels arriving each year, DHS faces the tough task of making sure the maritime system is protected. Technology is essential because it provides tools to keep trade and traffic flowing, Hutchinson said. Officials are testing a transportation worker identification system that would provide ID cards to workers at the ports after they undergo a background check. A pilot project for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) system being developed by the Transportation Security Administration is under way in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. **The Coast Guard is working on developing unmanned aerial surveillance, and private shippers are starting to provide advance manifests and conduct their own searches.**  
Source: <http://fcw.com/fcw/articles/2003/1027/web-bysea-10-29-03.asp>
10. *October 29, NBC10 News (Philadelphia)* — **Box cutters ground flights in Philly, Boston.** **Box cutters were found Tuesday on US Airways planes in Boston and Philadelphia, and federal officials said they were investigating how the tools made it on board.** Passengers were evacuated from a US Airways jet at Philadelphia International Airport after a box cutter was discovered aboard, officials said. Authorities in Boston later announced that one of the bladed tools was found on a US Airways Express propeller plane that had arrived at Boston's Logan Airport from Maine. **"There was a security concern for both aircrafts. We're cooperating fully with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the FBI,"** US Airways spokesman David Castelveter said. **"There's no reason to believe those incidents are related,"** TSA spokesperson Ann Davis said. **"No one's drawn any connections."** In Philadelphia, the bladed tool was found tucked inside a seat-back pouch on a US Airways jet that had arrived from Houston and was about 20 minutes away from a scheduled 3:55 p.m. departure for Phoenix, Davis said. In Boston, the crew of a US Airways Express propeller plane discovered the object during a routine inspection of the plane, Davis said. **The TSA and the FBI were investigating the incident,** Davis said.  
Source: <http://www.nbc10.com/travelgetaways/2589543/detail.html>
11. *October 28, Federal Computer Week* — **Atlanta to test US-VISIT tech.** Foreign travelers in Atlanta next month will be the first to test the new entry/exit system for tracking visitors to the United States. **Homeland Security Department officials will conduct a pilot test of the technologies used for entry and exit in the U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) system at Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport.** The project will include training and system testing, said Asa Hutchinson, DHS undersecretary for border and transportation security. **"This will be operational for all airlines going in and out of Atlanta International Airport,"** Hutchinson said Tuesday at a press briefing to unveil the new US-VISIT technology, which includes two forms of biometrics to verify a traveler's identity. **Officials plan to have the entry technology implemented at 115 airports and 14 seaports**



by January 5, 2004, with the exit systems running at up to 30 of the top airports, which cover 95 percent of the air traffic. The remaining airports and seaports will be phased in later that year, officials said. They expect US-VISIT to be implemented at land border checkpoints in phases in 2005 and 2006.

Source: <http://www.fcw.com/fcw/articles/2003/1027/web-usvisit-10-28-03.asp>

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## **Postal and Shipping Sector**

12. *October 29, DM News* — USPS, UPS plan rural offering. UPS will offer a service that combines its ground delivery service with the U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) Parcel Select. UPS will use Parcel Select for deliveries up to five pounds, primarily to rural or super-rural areas. **Customers will give their packages to UPS, which will move them through its ground network. UPS will separate out the packages that are to be delivered to the rural areas and turn them over to the local post office for final delivery.** "UPS has lost a lot of residential lightweight package volume to consolidators," said Doug Caldwell, a vice president at AFMS Transportation Management Group. "This is partly because consolidators can come in and offer a lower rate than UPS." **Parcel Select consolidators are concerned about the partnership, Caldwell said. They have been able to get business for deliveries to rural areas from mailers who might be UPS customers, but use the consolidators for shipments to rural locations to avoid the UPS surcharge. Caldwell also said that because UPS now will share delivery of packages that have gone exclusively through Parcel Select, the postal service could "lose some fairly significant volumes, at least in the short run."** Insiders said that FedEx might announce a similar partnership soon.

Source: [http://www.dmnews.com/cgi-bin/artprevbot.cgi?article\\_id=2542\\_3](http://www.dmnews.com/cgi-bin/artprevbot.cgi?article_id=2542_3)

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## **Agriculture Sector**

13. *October 29, Agricultural Research Service* — New approach to fighting Exotic Newcastle disease. A new approach to experimental vaccines that combat Exotic Newcastle disease (END) in poultry has been developed by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists. END is a contagious and fatal disease that affects most species of birds and kills almost all unvaccinated birds within days. Darrell Kapczynski and colleagues developed the vaccine. **California recently was hit by a severe outbreak of END. In all, some 3.5 million commercial and backyard poultry were euthanized to stop the virus from spreading to other states. More than \$104.5 million was spent by the federal-state task force.** Current vaccines rely on either attenuated live virus or killed virus to stimulate an immune response that induces protection in the bird. While these vaccines are effective, some birds' adverse reactions to the vaccines result in production losses. To overcome this problem, Kapczynski said he essentially took the virus apart, removed its replicating genetic material and then put it back together. **The experimental vaccine causes a protective immune response in the birds and makes it possible to differentiate between vaccinated and virus-infected birds. The new approach holds promise that better vaccines can be produced through biotechnology.**

Source: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2003/031029.htm>

14. *October 29, North Dakota Ag Connection* — **NDSU biosurveillance initiative. North Dakota State University (NDSU) and Dickinson State University (DSU) are working collaboratively on a biosurveillance initiative.** "Our goal is to rapidly identify, diagnose, contain, or prevent a disease outbreak in North Dakota livestock and crops," said to Doug Freeman, NDSU department of Veterinary Sciences. **"The potential threat of animal or plant disease introduction is significant, since North Dakota has extensive livestock and crop industries," Freeman says.** "We have expansive open range with a large international border, a high volume of livestock imports, extensive movement of animals out of the state, and a major crop export industry." **A key to the initiative is the new NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory's biosafety level 3 laboratory.** "Models will be developed for novel vaccines and rapid diagnostics," Freeman says. **At DSU, new methods for rapid communication and training to veterinarians, public health and regulatory officials, livestock producers, and customs inspectors will be assessed and enhanced.** Included in the DSU component will be Geographic Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems technology.

Source: <http://www.northdakotaagconnection.com/story-state.cfm?Id=58 &yr=2003>

15. *October 29, USAgNet* — **GM policy creating chaos in Brazil. The Brazilian state of Parana's decision to ban genetically modified (GM) crops has stranded over 1,000 trucks carrying soybeans from other Brazilian states to Brazil's main soy export port of Paranagua and the state's massive crushing industry.** Parana state agriculture agents recently began stopping soybean trucks at the state borders requesting certification that their loads are GM-free. The state is testing cargoes and turning back trucks that test positive for GM soy. And this is the interharvest period. **During the March-May harvest and several months after, hundreds of thousands of soy trucks carrying the bulk of Brazil's estimated 60 million metric ton crop will be headed for Parana and its port.** "The potential for loss under Parana's policy is enormous and the port may be greatly hurt," said grains analyst Flavio Franca Jr. of Safras e Mercado. **"Most importantly though, this is going to be a problem for the entire country."** Soy is Brazil's leading farm export, expected to bring in over ten percent of total trade revenues this year. Although the federal government has legalized GM soy in Brazil, it has left open the possibility of states declaring GM-free zones giving rise to the dilemma in Parana.

Source: <http://www.usagnet.com/story-national.cfm?Id=1169&yr=2003>

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## **Food Sector**

Nothing to report.

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## **Water Sector**

16. *October 29, Associated Press* — **Water pollution survey. Traces of prescription drugs, household cleaners, and chemicals from MRIs are showing up in the U.S. water supply,**

according to government researchers who have completed one of the most detailed surveys ever done on a single American watershed. Just how the pollution affects people or the environment is not clear, officials with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) said Tuesday. But they said the results of their Boulder Creek, CO, study reflects the common medications and household products getting into the nation's rivers and streams. The study, done in 2000, was the first to use the most advanced equipment to detect small traces of chemicals. Boulder Creek water meets federal safety standards, but chemicals including anti-depression, heart, and hormone medication adds a new wrinkle to water quality control nationwide, USGS scientist Sheila Murphy said. Chemicals detected in Boulder Creek include metals found in mayonnaise, shampoo, water softeners, and vitamin supplements. **"You would find the same results in a river downstream from any city,"** Murphy said. Officials said they study can be used to draw up water quality policies.

Source: [http://www.trib.com/AP/wire\\_detail.php?wire\\_num=296247](http://www.trib.com/AP/wire_detail.php?wire_num=296247)

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## **Public Health Sector**

17. *October 29, Reuters* — **California wildfires pose health risks. The immense quantities of smoke, soot, and ash being produced by the wildfires across southern California are posing significant health risks, health officials said on Tuesday.** "We know that smoke from wildfires has the greatest impact on the most sensitive populations," said Los Angeles County Department of Health Officer Dr. Jonathan Fielding. **He said the excessive amounts of smoke pervading the region could trigger asthma attacks, aggravate the condition of those suffering from emphysema, put increased stress on people with cardiovascular disease, and lead to increased infection in those suffering from lung disease.** The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services issued an official health alert on Monday, warning residents to exercise extreme caution to avoid fire-induced air pollution. **The smoke produced by the raging wildfires contains a number of pollutants, from fine particulates to carbon monoxide to cancer-causing toxic air contaminants such as benzo-a-pyrene, air quality officials said.**

Source: <http://www.reuters.co.uk/newsArticle.jhtml?type=healthNews&storyID=3709524&section=news>

18. *October 29, Globe and Mail* — **Health Canada says Internet drugstores may create problem. Health Canada is warning that burgeoning cross-border sales by Canadian pharmacies could cause drug shortages in Canada.** The warning came in a letter, sent across the country Monday to pharmacy and medical associations, by Diane Gorman, assistant deputy minister of health. "Cross-border sales of prescription drugs via the growing practice of Internet pharmacy also raise the potential for drug shortages domestically. Health Canada regards this as a very serious matter due to the inherent risk to Canadians' health," she wrote. "Should you become aware of any trends regarding drug supply, safety concerns or impacts on health human resources which may pose risks to Canadians' health, please communicate these to Health Canada." **This is the first time the federal government has raised concerns about cross-border drug sales leading to possible shortages. Gorman added that the issue will be discussed at a meeting of federal and provincial health officials.** Canadian pharmacists have raised concerns that the drugs flowing across the border could cause a shortage in Canada,



because major drug companies have already signalled that they will cut supplies to Canada unless Internet pharmacies are stopped.

Source: <http://www.globetechnology.com/servlet/ArticleNews/TPStory/LAC/20031029/UDRUGN29/TPTechnology/>

19. *October 28, BBC News* — **Warning over NHS bioterror plans. The UK National Health Service (NHS) must draw up plans to treat patients much more quickly in the event of a bioterrorist attack, government advisors have suggested. In a report, they warned that victims of any attack should be treated at the scene rather than at hospital. They suggested that ambulance crews could carry antidotes to certain chemicals and nerve agents so that they can treat people quickly.** "Unless ambulances routinely carry antidotes, it is difficult to foresee circumstances where pre-hospital administration is likely to occur unless prior knowledge of an intent to release is available," the report says. The Expert Group on Management of Chemical Casualties Caused by Terrorist Activity was set up last year to advise the government on the medical management of patients exposed to toxic chemicals as a result of a terrorist incident. In its first report, the committee outlines what treatments should be given to people who are exposed to nerve agents like Sarin gas, cyanide, mustard gas, and chlorine. **It urges ministers to buy autoinjection devices to make it easier for antidotes to be administered in the event of an attack. The Department of Health said it was considering the report.**

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/3220333.stm>

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## **Government Sector**

20. *October 29, CBC News (Canada)* — **Canada says Coast Guard should be armed.** Canada's Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defense is recommending the Coast Guard be armed and take on a larger role in policing Canadian waters. **In a report released Wednesday morning, the committee recommends an expanded national security role for the Canadian Coast Guard, and it recommends a public inquiry look into concerns about crime and terrorism at Canadian ports.** Senator Colin Kenny, chair of the committee, says the Coast Guard should become its own entity – it's currently part of the department of fisheries and oceans. "What we want to have is the federal equipment that we have off the coasts now, better used and better coordinated," Kenny says, "and right now we have a multitude of Coast Guard vessels that we think we could provide better service to the Canadian public, if they had the proper training, equipment, pay and frankly the coast guard fleet needs a major upgrading." **Kenny suggests the federal government will have to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to renew the coast guard fleet.**

Source: [http://nb.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=nb\\_coastguard20031029](http://nb.cbc.ca/regional/servlet/View?filename=nb_coastguard20031029)

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## **Emergency Services Sector**

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*October 29, Federal Emergency Management Agency* — **FEMA engaged in significant response and recovery activity for California wildfires.** Following President Bush's disaster declaration for the wildfires burning in California, **the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has begun significant federal response and recovery activity to assist the state, impacted local communities and individual Californians.** FEMA also continues to help California with costs associated with fighting both recent and new wildfires. Last night after returning from a trip to California to view fire damage, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Michael D. Brown, approved a Fire Management Assistance Grant for the Whitmore fire in Shasta County — the ninth such grant for the state just in the last week. **This grant allows the federal government to reimburse California for up to 75 percent of the cost of fighting this fire.** Eligible costs can include expenses for field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; tools, materials and supplies; and mobilization and demobilization activities. Source: <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=7164>

22. *October 29, KSDK News* — **Illinois firefighters battling massive warehouse fire.** Firefighters are continuing their efforts to contain a warehouse fire that rekindled early Monday morning at the Vandalia Warehouse complex in Granite City, IL. Smoke can be seen in the morning sky for miles. It appears that the firewall, created through efforts of the Granite City Fire Department and mutual aid teams, called to the scene, has failed. **The firewall represented fire crews' last stand to save the Michelin Retread building which contains thousands of tires.** The original fire occurred at 9:40 p.m. Sunday night, but was confined to a section of the office building, and was put out with the help of sprinklers. Fire crews returned to the scene Monday morning around 4:40 a.m. when the fire re-kindled. **Authorities won't say the fire is suspicious, but call the blaze "curious." Explosions have occurred during the fire. Authorities say propane tanks aboard forklifts had exploded. The Vandalia Warehouse contained metal products like scrap aluminum, some toys and even bicycles.** Fire officials say their efforts to contain the fire were hampered early due to the wood material inside the warehouse. Meanwhile, firefighters battling the massive warehouse fire say they're overwhelmed. They say lack of manpower and water have prevented crews from putting this fire out. Source: <http://cms.firehouse.com/content/article/article.jsp?sectionId=46&id=20804>

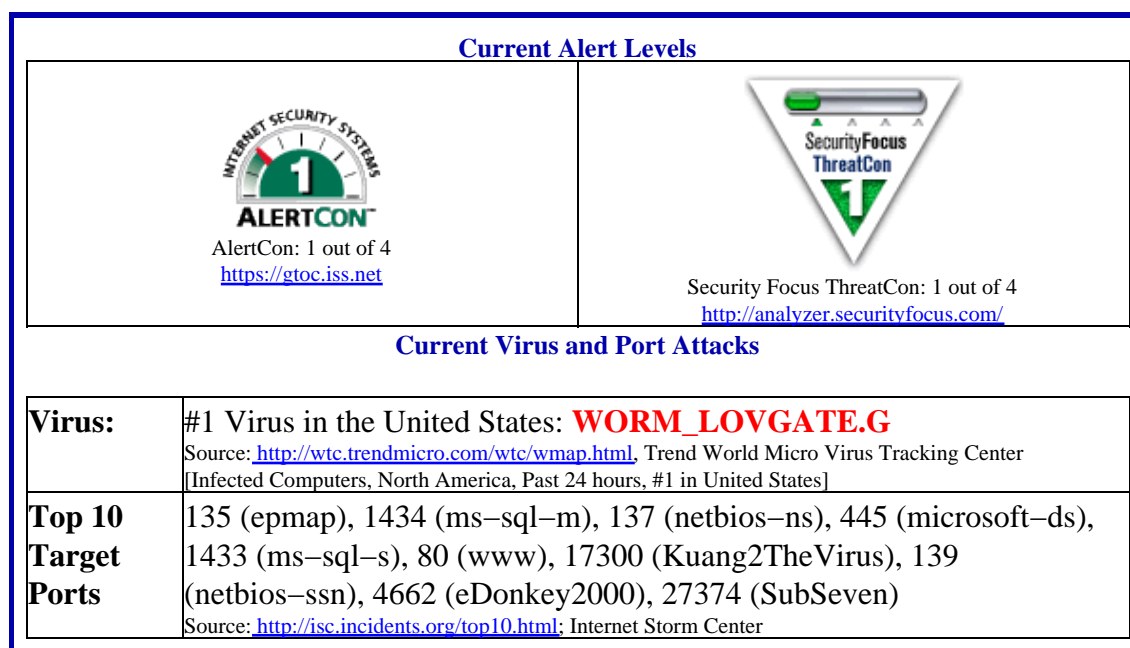
23. *October 29, Global Security Newswire* — **Ricin conviction nets prison sentence.** A U.S. district judge Tuesday sentenced a Washington state man to 13 years in prison for developing and possessing the lethal chemical ricin. **In July, a jury convicted 49-year-old Kenneth Olsen of “producing and possessing a biological agent — for use as a weapon” and “producing, owning and possessing a chemical weapon.”** Prosecutors said that Olsen had extensively researched ricin and methods of killing people with the toxin. Police officials testified that Olsen kept ricin at work and might have planned to use the poison to kill a boss or his wife. Olsen's family stood by him and unsuccessfully asked the judge to dismiss the conviction or to impose a light sentence. “This is a dangerous individual,” said Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl Hicks. At his sentencing hearing, Olsen denied accusations that he planned to harm someone with the ricin. Source: [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/recent\\_stories.asp?category=biological#ACF0AD43](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/recent_stories.asp?category=biological#ACF0AD43)

## **Information and Telecommunications Sector**

24. *October 28, CNET News.com* — **Orbitz investigates security breach. Online travel agency Orbitz has notified law enforcement authorities about a recent security breach that has resulted in its customers' e-mail addresses falling into the hands of spammers, an Orbitz representative confirmed Tuesday, October 28. "A small number of customers have informed us that they have received spam or junk e-mail from an unknown party that apparently used unauthorized and/or illegal means to obtain their e-mail addresses used with Orbitz," spokeswoman Carol Jouzaitis said in a statement. "There is no evidence that customer password or account information has been compromised," she said. **Orbitz found no indication that credit card information had been compromised**, Jouzaitis added. Orbitz became aware of the problem "in the last day or so," Jouzaitis said.**

Source: [http://news.com.com/2100-1038\\_3-5098644.html?tag=nefd\\_top](http://news.com.com/2100-1038_3-5098644.html?tag=nefd_top)

### **Internet Alert Dashboard**



## **General Sector**

25. *October 29, Associated Press* — **Sun hurls solar flare at Earth. The most powerful geomagnetic storm possible hit Earth early Wednesday, October 29, threatening power outages, disrupting airlines communications and damaging some satellites.** The storm is rated a G5, the highest intensity on scientists' scale of space weather. So far, there were few immediate reports of damage related to the geomagnetic storm. Larry Combs, forecaster for the Space Weather Center at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder, said that there had been radio communications disruptions in recent days for airlines, especially

those on north Atlantic and polar routes. In Tokyo, **Japan's space agency announced the Kodama communications satellite malfunctioned after being affected by the flare.** The agency said it was temporarily shut down and would be reactivated after the storm subsided, but there was no major communication disruption. **In southern California, wildfires already have knocked out many microwave communication antennas on the ground, making satellite communications important to emergency efforts. Researchers said safety personnel might encounter communications interference.** Federal researchers had turned off instruments and taken other precautions with science satellites.

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0.2933.101483.00.html>

26. *October 29, Los Angeles Times* — **Fires knock out quake monitors. Sixty-six of Southern California's 360 earthquake monitoring stations have been knocked out of service and key relay facilities probably have been destroyed by the fires of recent days,** a manager of the California Integrated Seismic Network said Tuesday, October 28. Manager Egill Hauksson of Caltech said **"the primary problem is loss of commercial communications and power without our telemetry system."** Hauksson said the outages would reduce the reporting of small quakes that occur by the dozens each day, but large, damaging quakes would be recorded by remaining stations. "In the recent fire, we have probably lost our microwave repeat site and Trinet/CISN station at Strawberry Peak, near Lake Arrowhead," he said. Witnesses saw a nearby facility belonging to AT&T burning, but it will take a crew from Caltech and the U.S. Geological Survey to confirm, after the fires are out, that the sites are destroyed, Hauksson said. **The Strawberry Peak station relays data from 60 monitoring stations, none of which have been heard from since the fires swept through the area near the Rim of the World.**

Source: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-seismic29oct29.1.6422593.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

27. *October 29, Agence France Presse* — **California fires kill 18, destroy 2,000 homes. More than 11,000 firefighters battled wildfires in California that have killed at least 18 people. The fires — described as the state's worst ever — had spread over at least 553,500 acres by Wednesday, October 29.** "This may well be the worst disaster the state has faced," outgoing California Governor Gray Davis said Tuesday of the 14 fires, many of which are now thought to have been sparked by arsonists. "I expect the cost in the next few days to near two billion dollars." Davis also declared a state of emergency in a fifth county in southern California, Riverside, where a new blaze is raging, two days after doing so in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino and Ventura counties. **The Red Cross opened shelters across the south of the state for the tens of thousands of people forced to flee, as health officials warned residents to stay indoors as acrid smoke and ash rained down on the region.** President George W. Bush declared a major disaster in the region Monday. In Washington, California governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger visited the U.S. Congress and pleaded for quick aid for fire victims.

Source: [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_world/view/54661/1/.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/54661/1/.html)

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